

**CITY of BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT and ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
of the CITY COUNCIL**

TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2010

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: dePara; Co-chair, A. Ayala, Brantley, Martinez *(arrived 6:40 pm)*
Council President McCarthy
(sat in to make a quorum prior to Council member Martinez's arrival)

NON-COMMITTEE: Council member M. McCarthy

STAFF: Bill Coleman/ OPED, Don Eversley/ Director OPED

Co-chair dePara called the meeting to order at 6:21 pm.

Approval of Committee Minutes of June 17, 2010 (Special Meeting).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

77-09 Resolution request that regular informational updates will appear and remain on the ECD&E agenda re: the current status and progress of the development project known as the Steel Pointe Harbor Development.

Co-chair dePara stated there was a request to table this item for the purpose of drafting the language.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO TABLE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. McCARTHY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

84-09 Grant Submission: re: 2010-2011 SWCAA - Chore Services for Seniors.

The representative present requested to withdraw the item because the grant wasn't funded.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. McCARTHY MOVED TO WITHDRAW THE ITEM**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

105-09 Grant Submission: re: State of Connecticut Department of Public Health for 2010-2011 Preventive Health & Health Services Block Grant Program.

Valerie Sorrentino presented this item. She explained the item pertained to a block grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health in the amount of \$27k for a nutrition program. Most of the money will go towards a farm stand located on Crescent Avenue every Wednesday, where there will be fresh produce. She noted that vouchers and food stamps will be accepted and people will get double of what they spend up to \$100.00. There is no staff pay coming from the grant. And the farm stand will be run by college interns. She encouraged everyone to come by to support the stand. She further noted that they paid an artist to design the artwork on the jersey barrier where the stand will be located – *she distributed a flyer that advertised the farm stand.*

Co-chair dePara asked if there was a phone number available for the council members to call, to let seniors know about the farm stand. Ms. Sorrentino said she would provide that information.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

106-09 Grant Submission: re: State of Connecticut Department of Public Health for 2010-2011 Per Capita Grant.

Ms. Sorrentino state that this was a per capita grant from the State Department of Public Health. The grant was for \$160k that will be used to support staff, health initiatives, health fairs and interns.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

110-09 Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Acquisition of 405 Knowlton Street.

Bill Coleman of OPED distributed a copy of the resolution that pertained to 405 Knowlton Street.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO ENTER A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION FOR 405 KNOWLTON STREET INTO THE RECORD AS EXHIBIT-I. AND A COPY OF THE PEQUONNOCK RIVER INITIATIVE DOCUMENT AS EXHIBIT-II**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION FOR 305 KNOWLTON STREET INTO THE RECORD AS EXHIBIT-III**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Coleman displayed a visual of slides as a presentation for both properties; 405 Knowlton Street and 305 Knowlton Street.

He stated that the funding source was available to acquire the two properties. The project will be HUD funded and they received \$4.5 million to intervene, acquire and

reposition the properties for sell. He pointed out that the Pequonnock River is where the parcels are located.

He went on to point out the areas denoted in yellow where there is a sliver of property that is owned by the city, in proximity to the fire station.

- The next slide showed recent city acquisitions, near the Sheehan Center ball field and the old Bridgeport Brass complex in proximity to the back side of the river. In addition, he pointed out a 4-story red brick building across from the new rental facility. He explained that the property was acquired through foreclosure. It was decided that they will put the facility in better shape, so the site was cleaned up to preserve public access rights along the water. He stated that last fall, they acquired a parcel from Acme. However, there are still some environmental issues that they are aware of and is being addressed.
- The next slide showed the properties at 305 and 405 Knowlton Street. He noted that the mast plan vision wasn't so far fetched from the project that is planned. He pointed out 405 Knowlton Street and 305 Knowlton that is a private owned piece of property. He said they were looking to construct a nice riverwalk in the area. He commented that when you see enough properties come together in a critical mass, the pieces of the development come together.

He displayed (13) more slides that consisted of numerous sites, such as:

- the Bridgeport Brass red brick building that will be torn down. They will create one acre plus of public space to be more marketable.
- Site of Acme at 2 ½ acres in disrepair and overgrown across the street. Acme is cleaning up the environmental problems. He noted that the parcel was sold to Snapple. He commented that when the river is opened up, it will be a pleasurable place for residents to enjoy. He said he hoped that the rivers that are currently contaminated will be restored in the near future.
- Slide of the old Bridgeport Brass, showing how the site has been considerably cleaned up. He noted that the street is a mix of residential and commercial.
- Slides of different scrap metal businesses and other businesses in the area.

Co-chair dePara mentioned the importance of having the public access preserved.

Mr. Coleman continued showing slides of:

- Restored homes on Knowlton Street
- A mock up of what Knowlton Street will look like in the future

Mr. Coleman noted that they will demolish the buildings to create open space that is immediately adjacent to the Acme site.

Council member Silva asked about the old entrance to the bridge and if it would be replaced. Mr. Coleman said there weren't any plans right now to replace it.

Council member M. McCarthy asked what the depth of the water was in the Pequonnock River. Mr. Coleman said it was 20 to 30 feet in the center and navigable. He commented it would be viable to put in a marina.

Council member Martinez asked where they would get the funds to improve the area near the water where it's currently in bad shape. Mr. Coleman said he was confident that they will find the funding for a portion of the area. He noted that private developers may be approached to do some construction, which will help clean up the area.

Mr. Coleman stated the appraised value in April 2010 for 405 Knowlton Street was \$190k. He said that committee authorization was required and he is still waiting for other departmental approvals.

Council member Martinez asked if it was possible to start construction on a portion of the property sooner, particularly near the bridge area. Mr. Coleman said there was some CDBG money set aside for Barnum Avenue, so he thought they could possibly begin development sooner for that area.

Council member dePara asked about 99% of the appraised value acquisition details. Don Eversley gave some brief information how that worked.

Council member dePara asked about the environmental problems. Mr. Coleman said for the Acme site at 405 Knowlton Street, they had a clean phase report done during August 1998; they are currently in the process of updating the information.

Council member Martinez commented about taking a portion of the site for commercial development for a restaurant or other mixes uses. Mr. Coleman explained the problems that might be associated with doing that from a bureaucratic perspective.

Mr. Coleman noted that a public hearing was required upon approval of items 110-09 and 111-09.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR
ITEM 110-09 405 KNOWLTON STREET**

resolution submitted to the city clerk's office

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC
HEARING PRIOR TO THE NEXT AVAILABLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

111-09 Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Acquisition of 305 Knowlton Street.

It was noted that the same presentation details and slides shown for 405 Knowlton Street applied to 305 Knowlton Street.

Co-chair dePara asked why they paid more for this site. Mr. Coleman said the transaction history was more complex. They purchased the site for \$525k during October 2005. Webster Bank gave them a loan for \$863k during July 2006 and they did some improvements. Then Webster Bank appraised the property for \$900k, but then Mr. Torres defaulted and subsequently foreclosure occurred. Then the property was acquired and appraised at \$830k. He clarified that phase I and phase II were already done. They are also paying for a portion of the hazardous materials inspection.

Co-chair dePara stated that he commended the city in their sincere and aggressive effort to recapture the waterfront, but he had a concern with the use of the NSP money.

He said he would like to see a mixture of businesses along the waterfront, specifically clean type businesses and not just homes. He emphasized that they needed to create a synergy to attract a wide range of people.

Council member Martinez commented that she was excited that the development was happening in her district. She offered to lend any assistance they needed that would help the endeavor.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION
FOR ITEM 111-09 FOR 305 KNOWLTON STREET**

resolution submitted to the city clerk's office

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC
HEARING PRIOR TO THE NEXT AVAILABLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services